

Governor Markell Announces State Employees of the Year

DOVER – Governor Jack A. Markell today recognized and celebrated the efforts of the 2015 recipients of the Delaware Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service. The award winners and nominees were recognized for their exemplary efforts in service to the State of Delaware.

“These individuals exemplify what it means to be a public servant,” said Governor Markell. “Their commitment and dedication to serving Delawareans is to be commended, and I thank them for the work they do every day for our State.”

The 2015 recipients are:

- **Grace Alexander** – Ms. Alexander has been employed by DHSS at Terry Children’s Center (TCC) since November 1979, providing well over 30 years of exceptional service to some of Delaware’s most difficult children. Over the past several years TCC has been undergoing a culture change and a shift to a more Trauma-Informed approach of dealing with clients. One of the measures used to assess progress has been how often employees are forced to use physical restraint. This past quarter TCC had its lowest number of the use of physical restraint of any three month period in its history, and this was due in large part to Ms. Alexander’s embrace of a new approach to working with kids and her ability to assist her staff with the transition. In the month of February, TCC had no physical restraints. This is the first time this has happened at TCC for a calendar month. Given the level of aggression and dysregulation of the kids, this is a phenomenal accomplishment for TCC.

- **Dr. Richard Greene** – Dr. Greene is a longtime employee of DNREC and was the architect of a new interagency initiative

that takes a watershed approach and applies it to toxic contaminants. This new approach was applied recently to the Mirror Lake Remediation and Restoration Project in Dover. Contaminants in the sediments of Mirror Lake and the Saint Jones River make fish unsuitable for human consumption and have other aquatic life impacts. Using approximately \$150,000 worth of volunteer labor, construction was completed in November 2013. Plantings were completed in the spring of 2014. This centerpiece of downtown Dover will no longer be an environmental liability and its stability and appearance will be enhanced dramatically, all due to the efforts of Dr. Greene and his colleagues. The Mirror Lake project received two national awards from the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists. Honor Awards for Excellence in Environmental Engineering and Science were given in both the Small Project and University Research categories. The project is also being considered for the Chesapeake Bay Best Urban Management Practice Award in a category for projects outside of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

- **Michael Haddadin** – Mr. Haddadin's 25-year career with DelDOT began as a casual seasonal toll collector in August 1989. After six months, he became a full-time toll collector and then moved into supervision. In January 2014, he transitioned to the Operations Manager at the Dover Toll Plaza. With a "fresh set of eyes," he immediately began to make improvements to the plaza. After consulting with employees, the facility improvements he made included: relocation of the parking spots for the disabled closer to an entrance to ease accessibility; replacement of the old and soiled ceiling tiles; painting of the interior areas; installation of new flooring; the enhancement of lighting; repairing of sidewalks and a stone walkway; upgrading of the landscaping around the building; relocation of the employee uniform room to ease staff access; and logistical and operating procedures. Cameras in the toll booths were repositioned to provide better visibility to both the customer and to the collector's money drawer. The cosmetic

changes immediately improved employee morale, and the repairs increased safety for both the employees and the customers.

- **Randall “RL” Hughes** – DSHS Deputy Principal Assistant RL Hughes, was selected as Acting Director of the new Division of Forensic Science (DFS). In just six months, with Mr. Hughes at the helm, the new agency transformed its operations and embraced every challenge as an opportunity for success. Mr. Hughes assembled a leadership team from the various units within the new Division to restore the integrity of the operation and ensure the Division maintained the highest scientific standards. Much of the work of this team focused on addressing the nearly 100 recommendations outlined in the Andrews International Report. In early 2014, Andrews International, a risk mitigation consulting company, conducted an assessment of the OCME organization. As a result of the assessment, 94 recommendations were documented as areas requiring improvement. In January 2015, Andrews International was asked to conduct a follow-up assessment of the new DFS. Due to the hard work and dedication of the DFS team, all but eight recommendations have been completed, significantly improved or are no longer applicable. The eight remaining recommendations are currently under review but require longer implementation timelines due to IT infrastructure, facility, or budget issues.

- **Kathrina Stroud** – Ms. Stroud has served the State for 23 years, and in 2013, she became DelDOT’s Civil Rights Administrator. Under her direction, the Civil Rights Section highlighted the Small Business Element of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program in 2014. This Small Business Element program launched its first project last year. The project was designed to educate and offer more opportunities for small businesses under the Small Business Administration to more successfully bid on specific jobs. Outreach of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and On-the-Job Training programs to grassroots and community organizations greatly

increased in 2014. This outreach effort aimed to assist the organizations with finding training and jobs for underemployed and underutilized women and minorities. This outreach also incorporated educational training and experiences for elementary and high school students. Due to this outreach and creation of educational workshops, the section saw a 31 percent increase in 2014 in the number of businesses who successfully completed the certification process (42 businesses in 2014 versus 32 businesses in 2013) along with expanded diversity of business owners who applied in 2014.



Governor Jack A. Markell recognized nominees and recipients of the Delaware Award for Excellence and Commitment in State Service at a ceremony on May 5, 2015 in Dover.